

LT. GOVERNOR JOHN GARAMENDI ISSUES STATEMENT REGARDING STATE SENATE'S APPROVAL OF \$103-BILLION BUDGET

SACRAMENTO - Lt. Governor John Garamendi issued the following statement Tuesday regarding the State Senate's approval of a \$103-billion budget:

"Today's long-overdue agreement on a spending plan for California will help ensure critically needed funding for many of our state's most essential programs. The plan will help fund our network of state-supported health clinics, which provide care for those without health insurance. It will bring a great measure of relief to the many small businesses that contract with the state for critical services, but have not been paid since July 1. And it will deliver funds for community colleges and other important education programs which are critical to the preparedness and quality of our future workforce.

"However, more remains to be done. Today, despite the best efforts of our health clinics, more than 6 million uninsured Californians must rely on expensive trips to the emergency room when illness strikes. It is long past time for California to develop a universal health care program that provides coverage for each and every resident.

"In addition, we simply must follow through on the promise of AB 32 and continue to lead the fight against global warming. Delaying the timely implementation of this landmark measure, as this budget would do, only hastens the advance of climate change and its severe consequences. "And we must change our ways and invest in higher education. The cost of a college education has skyrocketed in the past decade, and we are pricing many well-qualified students out of an education. Our universities and colleges hold the key to our future economic growth - a highly skilled, well-trained workforce. We must ensure that all Californians who qualify have an opportunity to pursue their dreams.

"It is my sincere hope that the Governor and the Legislature will now work together to address these and other issues facing our great state."

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